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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y ( ADDING SIPDIS CAPTION )

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/FO AND AF/W  
DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR IO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/10/2011  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [USUN](#) [KDEM](#) [SL](#)  
SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT STOPS COOPERATION WITH UN MISSION OVER  
UN MISSION QUARTERLY REPORT TO SECURITY COUNCIL

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES JAMES A. STEWART FOR REASONS 1.4 B/D.

Summary

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11. (C) President Kabbah and his Government did not like the criticisms in the recent UN Secretary General's quarterly report to the Security Council on the UNIOSIL mission and reacted by discontinuing cooperation with the UN mission. The international community supports UNIOSIL and the Executive Representative of the Secretary General (ERSG) Victor Angelo. The UK is leading the appeal for calm. Secretary General Annan's May 10 letter to Kabbah underscored

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that Security Council members agreed with the report's assessment. He cited the progress made, but also cited major challenges that remain. Annan appealed to Kabbah not to proceed with the restrictions envisioned by the Government. Annan is to call Kabbah late May 11. We understand that he will delicately try to walk Kabbah back from his hard-line position. Progress in Sierra Leone depends largely on a successful UN mission and the ERSG is a strong leader who we and the international community strongly support. Rather than shooting the messenger, Kabbah and his people should concentrate on the positive and long run progress, and on being seen by the international community and by the Sierra Leonean electorate not as thin-skinned but as working for broad improvement. ERSG Angelo must be deft in finding ways to depressurize the situation. The UK is taking the lead in helping do that and we and the other mission need to find ways to help. End Summary.

GOSL Displeased with UN Report ...

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12. (C) President Kabbah and his Government have taken umbrage at the UN Secretary General's first report to the Security Council on the operations of the UNIOSIL. UNIOSIL staff drafted the report but UN New York staff adjusted it, according to UNIOSIL chief, Executive Representative of the Secretary General (ERSG) Victor Angelo.

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... and Discontinues Cooperation with UN Mission

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13. (C) On May 5, the Government delivered a Note Verbale to UNIOSIL saying that it would discontinue cooperation with UNIOSIL until the report is withdrawn. The Note Verbale is unavailable, but we understand from Angelo that the particular point the Government did not like was language to

the effect that some people think the Government is manipulating the judicial system to its own ends, citing the cases of Charles Margai, who started a new political party that has broken away from Kabbah,s ruling SLPP, and the treason case of Omrie Golley.

#### International Community Supports UN

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14. (C) The UK High Commission informed Charge of this difficulty and while in the past they have had some differences with the ERSG and UN agencies, they completely support the UNIOSIL mission and the ERSG. Early on May 10, as he explained, the UK Charge called the Minister for Presidential Affairs to try to keep the Government's focus on long term improvements, appeal for calm, and diplomatically to de-escalate the situation so that the Government does not continue to overreact and find itself painted into a corner. He appealed for us to deliver a similar message calling for calm to ministers, as the occasion arises.

15. (C) Late on May 20, ERSG Angelo called Charge to share his similar concerns on the Government's overreaction. He said that while there is progress in Sierra Leone, the UN quarterly report cited a number of areas where progress is still needed. The language, he said, was made much sharper in NY than the more rounded terms UNIOSIL used.

#### UN Secretary General Letter to Kabbah ...

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16. (C) UNIOSIL forwarded to the Embassy a copy of the letter UN Secretary General Kofi Annan sent to President Kabbah, dated May 10. It underscored that Security Council members agreed with the assessments in the report. It also cites the progress made and lists the areas of "major challenges." Some of the listed points are governance, the judicial system, human rights, employment, and the fight against corruption. The Security Council agreed with the report's assessment, welcomed progress made, and acknowledged the need for the Government to continue to work closely with UNIOSIL and other partners. In his letter, the SyG reassured Kabbah of the UN's commitment to cooperating with the Government and appealed to Kabbah not to proceed with the restrictions envisaged in the Note Verbale.

#### ... And Annan to Call Kabbah May 11

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17. (C) Late on May 11, the UK Charge related that per the UK NY Mission, SyG Annan would be calling Kabbah late in the afternoon from Vienna. The UK view is that the call is necessary and must be conducted most diplomatically to smooth Sierra Leonean ruffled feathers and ease the situation back to normal. The UK Charge promised confirmation when the call takes place.

#### Comment

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18. (C) The UNIOSIL mission is essential to building security and stability and putting the country on a footing for greater democracy and prosperity. The international community agrees on that and many Sierra Leoneans see that, as well. The danger in this is that Pres. Kabbah and his Government might keep their hackles up and for reasons of misplaced pride, go so far as to demand the resignation of ERSG Victor Angelo. Many Sierra Leonean leaders frequently shout down criticism (like the UN report) of the Government because, they say, it makes the country look bad to donors and foreign investors, and that especially is not good, they say, with elections coming up in 2007. The alternative is to accept fair criticism and be seen to do so as a responsible nation builder, and present that to the voters come 2007. We and our contacts in the international community hold Angelo in high professional and personal regard. He has a clear view of the big picture and the long run, and is both forthright and diplomatic. He speaks with a clear voice and is often in the press with a commentary or critique; perhaps too frequently in the view of government officials. The UN would be unlikely to be able to find a replacement as qualified and energetic anytime soon. There is the danger

that raising the profile of this GOSL-UN difference of opinion could have the effect of making the Government more rigid in its position. The better course is to work to show the Sierra Leonean leadership a way to climb down from its rigid stance. ERSG Angelo must be sure-footed in helping that happen and even as the UK continues to play a lead role locally and reportedly at UN NY, it is also incumbent on us and other missions to support the effort. End Comment.  
STEWART